

State Board of Education & Early Development
Item 6A. Draft Minutes
December 06, 2023
Virtual Meeting Platform
Department of Education & Early Development

Wednesday, December 06, 2023

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

Roll was called, and the following members were present to provide a quorum: Member Pamela Dupras, Member Jeff Erickson, Military advisor and Lt. Col. James Fowley, Second Vice Chair Sally Stockhausen, Student Advisor Felix Myers, Member Barbara Tyndall, First Vice Chair Lorri Van Deist, and Chair James Fields, Member Bob Griffin.

Chair Fields called a quorum and Vice Chair Lorri Van Diest gave the invocation and led the pledge.

First Vice Chair Van Diest motioned, and Member Erickson seconded, a motion to adopt the December 6, 2023 agenda. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There were no potential conflicts of interest identified by board members.

Public Comment

Public comment was opened at 12:12 p.m.

Tim Duran – Opposes/Supports Cut Scores special session. I am here to testify today regarding the assessment cut scores before you. I would like to note that I appreciated having the opportunity to participate in the validation study last May. The meeting was well facilitated, engaging, productive, and focused on a specific lens of validating last year's cut scores. I learned a lot about the process. Participant questions surrounding the assessments and the context, for the cut scores were noted and set to the side for possible further discussions outside the parameters of this exercise. Though I have some reservations about the specific lens undertaken, I want to commend the deed staff and the facilitating partner for the insights I gain from being part of the process. The proposed cut scores before you are essentially relatively arbitrary demarcations separating students into various categories or grade bands. As such they can be adjusted or even curved, as many of us may have experienced during our academic careers. The proposed scores do not reflect much numerical difference from the current cut scores. However, it is unclear what the actual impact of those apparently small differences are. Last year, when you considered the cut scores, you were provided with anticipated impact data providing a reference point. This year, I noted that impact data is lacking in the report. I would suggest that this is important information for you as a board and for the public so that there is some context for these numbers, otherwise they are just numbers without reference. The cut scores will be what they are, however, cut scores do not exist in a vacuum and they have a direct impact on students, families, schools, and even communities. The assessment tool is one component of a broader system; it all needs to be considered. Are the standards for the test current? Ours are over 10 years old. Do we know how the students process the questions and supportive material in arriving at their answers? We have not done an item analysis with at least

some consideration of the student response lens in approximately 20 years. Are the expected achievement markers inclusive of the developmental ranges, ethnicities, genders, backgrounds, etc., for individual students? We have not looked at this from a student's perspective. Is the bar cut score appropriately set? Is it achievable for most, if not all students to achieve? These are questions we need to look at. The cut scores are important as they determine presumed proficiency rates for students individually and collectively, across our State. They send a direct message to a student and their family. You are proficient for passing, or you are non-proficient, failing. How does the message affect expectations when the impact data suggests broad non-proficiency? You can't do it, why try; what is our message? The same data point is then used to label not only students but schools and educators. It is used by some to refuse to invest in public education. The data needs to be accurate. We owe it to our students, educators, and families to take the time to review, analyze, and update the full assessment system. I ask that you insist as the lead education body in our state, that such a process be undertaken. I want to thank you for listening, and for your time.

Posie Boggs – Opposes Cut Scores special session. This is Posie Boggs and I'm speaking as part of the Alaska Reading Coalition, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak today. I have two different topics that I'd like to speak on. One is the changing of cut scores. Whether it is for third grade and up on the Alaska STAR, or whether it is cut scores on the testing or screening done in the Alaska Reads Act. I am opposed to any cut score changes that are not within a national norm, at least within plus or minus 10%. I want to remind the school board that about 10 years ago, this board decided to lower the cut scores for the old SBA (Standards Based Assessment), and it was done in such a way that the outcomes were about 50% less than the national norms. So that meant that parents were being lied to about how well their students were reading and doing math when compared to national norms. This caused immense trouble for our military families when they left Alaska, thinking that their child was 80% proficient, great, right? And then they move to another state, only to find out that their child was never reading as well as Alaska told them, via the SBA. So, I am adamantly opposed to decreasing any proficiency (whether it's the Alaska STAR or whether it's the screening for the Alaska Reads Act) away from national norms. Our kids can't go outside and not be able to read. The whole point of the Alaska Reads Act was to prevent that.

I've been following the implementation of the Alaska Reads Act via families that I know across the State and via the teachers who are experiencing its implementation firsthand. Families with kindergartners and first graders all seemed to be going well with the implementation until September 29. Kids were screened, plans were written, meetings with families happened and everything. I'm sure it was a huge workload on our teachers, our schools, and our district, but they pulled together, and they did it. But then I hear about some actions from DEED that make me want to call the Alaska Reading Coalition right back together. What I've heard is that everything is going to be changing with the Reads Act and the timeline, for example, only requiring the IRIPs if you're well below on the risk category. The Alaska Reads Act says any student below proficient. It doesn't say just the students well below proficient. It says, any student below proficient as measured by the M class dibbles 8 assessment. The Reads Act applies to all students who are not proficient. It's wrong to give districts, especially after the districts work so hard the first 6-7 weeks of school to suddenly say, oops, you didn't really need to do that. I very much disagree with that. Then, having kindergartners not being screened at all until winter messes up the whole timeline that is required by the Reads Act. If kindergartners aren't even being tested, not even once till mid-winter, districts have 45 days to make a reading plan and meet with parents. Well, that gets us out all the way till March and spring break. And then, after you get the reading plan, you have to implement the intervention. So, in a whole kindergarten year, a student well below proficient or just below proficient is not going to get any intervention until the month of April, and then it's testing time

again. At the same time, you must have meetings about retention with the kids who are not reading proficiently. So, you're going to be called for a meeting about retention where intervention has not been done, progress monitoring has not had time to be done, and there's no data to present to the parents, giving the parents the decision whether they need to retain their student or not. Changing the timing does not benefit the students who need the intervention; it delays intervention. If we tested the kindergartners at the beginning of fall, you have the meeting; you have the plan. That means the student probably gets to at least December, January, February, March, and April, 5 months of intervention, and the opportunity is gone.

Mark Roseberry – Comment Tribal Compacting special session. My name is Mark Roseberry. I'm the Director of Education for the Iñupiat community with the Arctic Slope. ICAS was a part of the negotiations for the tribal compacting, and we really appreciated this opportunity to work with the State. This effort and part of the Alaska education challenge is important. I've worked with our native students for decades and the need for a change in the way that we provide education, especially in our rural areas, is extremely important. Our tribes are poised to serve our citizens in that way, as well as others, in our communities. Having that focus is very important. This effort and the work that was done in the negotiations in the tribal compacting and within the plans is going to be extremely beneficial to our rural students, both native and non-native. It's going to provide a method of education that serves them in a better manner. We do see by having the culture, by having a different approach, that our students are responding. Those who have dropped out of the system are responding. They feel comfortable about being there. In fact, a lot of times what we see is the students aren't even ready to go home at the end of the day; because what happens within our schools, when local people are running them, the community on the outside is the same as what's on the inside of the school. And so, students moving back and forth are not moving into a different culture or different expectations; they're the same. As a result, they respond. And we're seeing so many good things moving out just in our efforts. So, this tribal compacting, I believe, will make a huge difference and hope that you're able to move things forward. That's basically what I wanted to share today.

Public comment closed at 12:25 p.m. after Chair Fields gave thanks to all participants.

Work Session

Agenda Item 1 - UAA School of Education Update:

Dr. Denise Runge, Provost, Office of Academic Affairs, University of Alaska opened and introduced Dr. Tonya Dousay, Dean of UAA to present update to board.

Dr Dousay shared timeline and highlighted six of the key changes and activities engaged in continuous improvement this past year: 1. Finalized Next survey customizations, distribution, and data sharing with UAS. 2. Engaged in assessment workshops to revise key assessments for CAEP expectations. 3. Responded to stakeholder concerns and revised Gateway and placement applications. 4. Developed workflows to support teacher candidate processes. 5. Realigned key assessments for fidelity and InTASC alignment. 6. Piloted candidate data assessment collection through zero-cost tools.

As of this semester a total of seventy-six early childhood instructor students are enrolled in the B.A. at UAA in Fall 2023. There are a few that have begun to make their way through the program, and graduated our first two licensed Pre K-3rd grade teachers last May.

As a result of partnering with both DEED and the Department of Health, we have been able to

receive \$85,000 from the Department of Health this year. Every student at King Tech High School in Anchorage that enrolled in the early childhood career pathway had their dual credit fees covered this semester and the next. These students will graduate with six credits of early childhood coursework, including their Social Science General Ed. requirement completed due to this funding. We're also able to cover fingerprinting fees for students outside of the Anchorage area as well as half of the application processing fee for the background check.

UAA is excited to announce the Alaska Sprout Scholars Program. The first cohort initially was created by AEYC, as we've been offering courses from our occupational certificate at UAS in Juneau with that very strong partnership. We call those students our AEYC Sprout Scholars. We have just opened nominations to our first cohort, Department of Health Sprout Scholars. The students will complete twelve credits of early childhood coursework, making them eligible for licensure, getting them into the workforce, and also helping them jumpstart their professional development.

First Vice Chair Van Diest: What portion of the assessments in the courses deals with the Science of Reading? I'm anticipating it's not just the Science of Reading in those five courses.

Dr. Dousay: No, and to be fair, the Science of Reading is broken up appropriately across the courses. All of our faculty use performance-based assessments. This would include combining theory with performing and being able to demonstrate. When students are out in the field, it will vary by course.

First Vice Chair Van Diest: The report referenced a final assessment or teacher portfolio; help me understand what that looks like.

Dr. Dousay: This is based on the national standard. Originally Pearson, the publisher that we're familiar with, put together the education teacher portfolio assessment. States were able to buy into this, it was quite expensive, but future teachers were expected to prepare a complete portfolio that had five different tasks as part of it.

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen: What will graduates need to do to be qualified under the Alaska Reads Act? How are you preparing them beyond just your classwork so they can be ready to go after they have their diploma?

Dr. Dousay: This is where we are taking a two-pronged approach. One is because we know we're likely to have some candidates who are caught in that in between. We have been offering a Praxis prep course in the summer specifically for students. Initially, we were targeting the Praxis one and two, but when testing for the science of reading became an option, we realized that some of our students might need to jump into that. UAS and DEED are redesigning the first course to meet the Alaska Reads Act standards.

Lieutenant Colonel Fowley: I've a lot of folks in my organization that have been instructors in the military for 20-30 years, and many already come with a bachelor's degree. How would they get into this process?

Dr. Dousay: Our faculty are introducing a post bacc option using the same courses that are in our BA program. We have been in preliminary conversations with DEED, since we are using the same courses, it would be allowable for licensure. We are also working in the school of education in our

master's program, and we are adding adult education and learning, design, and technology concentrations. Both of which tend to be very attractive for military instructors.

Agenda Item 2 – Cook Inlet Tribal Council Culturally Relevant Schools Grant Final Report Presentation

Presented by Gloria O'Neil, President and CEO, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, and Aaron Leggett, Project Co-chair and President of Native Village of Eklutna. Shared video, Our Future Ancestors: A Story of Education in Alaska.

This project was started to create a process by which we can hear from across Alaska, in particular our rural communities about what success looks like, and how to truly engage our communities and utilize a process where we may think outside the box a little bit. As we've engaged in this work, we have traveled to nearly every region in our state gathering over 600 stories from teachers, community leaders, parents, and students. In gathering these stories, we felt it was extremely important to catalog them, and create a tool that not only we are supporting in the long term, and working in partnership with DEED, but we also create a tool in which our communities can continue to talk about what success looks like to them. By hearing these stories, we were able to identify several models of what's working well in the communities.

A true partnership was the vision that really inspired this work moving forward. That we have a public education system that is organized in such a way where if we really push the lines, we can have a true partnership of how we take the current education system and integrate what we've heard across the state. For example, multi-generational learning, how do we think about getting our culture bearers and our elders into the classroom? We have models for creating paraprofessional certificates. There may be an opportunity where we can create demonstration projects in a few of the rural school districts that could be meaningful to really see how it works and evaluate the outcomes and impacts, making learning more relevant. There's a lot of alignment in indigenous knowledge, and what our communities and elders know that we could bring in through the classroom. Language is so important; if there were ways across the state, we could figure out how to teach more of the tribal languages within the various school districts.

Agenda Item 3 – Draft Board Report to the Legislature

DEED Public Information Officer Caroline Hamp discussed the contents for the 2024 State Board of Education Report to the Legislature. This is a draft report, the final report will be shared at next meeting in January. State Statute says that the State Board will prepare and submit an annual report to the Legislature outlining board and department actions. Note that the actions covered today will also be included in the final report, since it covers the calendar year. The report will cover regulations, and other actions passed by the board and significant steps which include assessment changes, including AKStar, the Alaska Reads Act, Advancing State Tribal education compacting, and improving teacher retention and recruitment. We will also be adding information on the Alaska Reading Institute before the final version. The last two sections are other department functions and school student data. Feedback, suggestions, additions, and clarifications are welcome.

Member Griffin: One of the elements that's been missing, for example, other state boards when they go to the legislature, they're always looking for legislative remedies that would kind of assist in their objectives. I don't know if there may be an appropriate section for us to have some legislative partnership or priorities to help each other out, our board report might be an appropriate vehicle for that.

Chair Fields responded that since the board is part of the Executive Branch, they go hand in hand with the Governor's agenda so it can be a little tricky. It may be something the Commissioner can get together with the Executive Branch and discuss some priorities. Commissioner Bishop offered to bring it up with the Executive Branch at the next meeting.

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen inquired if the apprenticeships and alternate routes could be included in the final report. Commissioner Bishop responded that this is a great suggestion and could include that as well as more information about the Reading Institute. Some progress has been made in those areas, and looks forward to sharing in January's board meeting.

Agenda Item 4 – Tribal Compacting Update and Draft Report to the Legislature

DEED Director of Tribal Affairs Joel Isaak shared a presentation with the board to give an update on Tribal compacting and how this work fits into the department's mission, vision, and purpose in thinking about helping students shape satisfying and worthwhile lives. He gave an overview of the Senate Bill 34 Legislative Report: State Tribal Education Compact Schools Demonstration. The key piece to remember is we are looking at transforming education as one system in our state. Making space within that system and making changes that need to happen, all schools will feel the benefits of these impacts. How do we transform our system to do what's best for our students? That is a shared priority across all our partners, the tribes, and the State for this work. This work is dedicated to the students of Alaska, their families, and those working to ensure a brighter future. To those who have come before, are with us today, and our future ancestors.

Findings – Governance Policy Summary: Tribal Compacted Public Schools (TCPS) would be established through the creation of a Tribal Compacted Public School District. This would allow Tribes a level of local control and self-determination needed to operate TCPS while interfacing within the parameters of Alaska Statute Title 14.

Funding Policy Summary: To start the initial pilot TCPS, the Tribes need to have start-up funds. The TCPS would be funded per the foundation formula under AS 14.17.140, using the same student count period, formula multipliers, and considerations as other school districts that do not have a local contribution.

Personnel Policy Summary: Tribes may not employ teachers in a TCPS unless the teacher holds a valid Tribal Compact (TC) teacher certificate. STEC Tribes are responsible for establishing their own system of training, certifying, and evaluating the staff employed in a TCPS. Tribes are responsible for putting their TC teacher certification credential process on file with DEED. DEED will issue licenses to a teacher who demonstrates that they have completed a TC teacher certification program, met the background requirements check requirements under AS 14.20.020(f), and paid the department the required fee. TCPS staff licensed by DEED shall be under the Professional Teaching Practices Commission (PTPC). For these reasons, DEED is requesting updates to PTPC to incorporate TCPS. TCPS staff are not state employees but are subject to the hiring and employment process established by the TCPS district. Certificated TCPS professionals are eligible to join the TRS and PERS retirement systems but are not required to join.

Agenda Item 5 – Proposed Regulations for Public Comment

5A. Assessment Cut Scores

Dr. Elizabeth Greninger provided a presentation regarding AK Star and Assessment Cut Scores. Cut scores are the scale scores that sit at the borders of two achievement levels and allow us to define proficient and non-proficient performance. Cut scores separate test takers into various

categories. In Alaska, three cut scores classify students into achievement levels for English, Language Arts, and Mathematics.

5B. Assessment Participation Guidelines

Dr. Elizabeth Greninger presented for the board to consider opening a period of public comment on the proposed amendment regarding the participation guidelines for the inclusion of Alaska students in our state assessment, with the adoption of a statewide literacy screener to include a section that addresses how we treat the inclusion of all students in that literacy assessment for grades K-3. There are minor updates to the AK Star section with clarifications on the tools that are available on the AK Star platform, as well as a slight reorganization of the DLM and access for English learners sections.

Agenda Item 6 – Proposed Regulations for Adoption

6A. Limited Teacher Certifications and Seal of Biliteracy

Commissioner Bishop stated that they completed a second round of public comment to adopt supplemental changes to limited teacher certificate regulations and proposed amendments to the Seal of Biliteracy. Sondra Merideth was online to answer any questions. No questions or comments for this item.

Agenda Item 7 – MEHS School Advisory Board Appointment

Appointment of member to the Mount Edgecumbe High School Advisory Board. Superintendent Suzzuk Huntington presented to the board with no discussion or questions.

Business Meeting

Agenda Item 8 – Approve Draft Board Report to the Legislature

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen motioned, and First Vice Chair Van Diest seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the draft report to the Legislature. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 9 – Approve Tribal Compacting Draft Report to the Legislature

First Vice Chair Van Diest motioned, and Second Vice Chair Stockhausen seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the draft State Tribal Education Compact Schools demonstration legislative report. First Chair Van Diest commented on Joel's outstanding work on this report. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 10 – Proposed Regulations for Public Comment

10A. Assessment Cut Scores

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen motioned, and Member Griffin seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development open a period of public comment on proposed amendments to 4 AAC 06.739(b) achievement levels for English Language Arts and Mathematics, and 4 AAC 06.822(b) Accountability Sub Scores. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

10B. Assessment Participation Guidelines

First Chair Van Diest motioned, and Second Vice Chair Stockhausen seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development open a period of public comment to amendments to 4 ACC 06.775(a) administering statewide assessments to students with disabilities; whereby an updated version of the participation guidelines for inclusion of Alaska

students in State assessments is proposed to be adopted by reference. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 11 – Proposed Regulations for Adoption

11A. Limited Teacher Certificates and Seal of Biliteracy

Member Griffin motioned, and First Vice Chair Van Diest seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the addition of 4 AAC 04.225 Alternative Foreign Language Proficiency Assessment Standards and corresponding updates to 4 AAC 46.079(b)(2)(D), 4 AAC 06.079(b)(2)(E), 4 AAC 06.079(b)(2)(F), 4 AAC 06.079(C), 4AAC 06.079(H) (Seal of Biliteracy); and replace the Read option of 4 AAC 12.388 Limited world Language immersion teacher certificate and corresponding updates to 4 AAC 12.397(e) (Mandatory training requirements); and 4 AAC 12.405 (Renewal of certificates). Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 12 – MEHS School Advisory Board Appointment

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen motioned, and First Vice Chair Van Diest seconded the motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development appoint Amber Cunningham as the parent representative for term A on the Mount Edgecumbe High School Advisory Board. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 13 – Amend meeting dates and location

Member Griffin motioned, and First Vice Chair Van Diest seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the following schedule of meeting dates and locations, format virtual meetings versus in-person for the 2023-2024 school year. Dates 27-28 February in-person, Juneau, June 4-6, 2024 in-person Kotzebue regular meeting. Motion passed unanimously with no discussion in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 14 – Approve Executive Secretary

First Vice Chair Van Diest motioned, and Second Vice Chair Stockhausen seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the Commissioner's appointment of Kathijo Jolin as Executive Secretary to the Commissioner and the Board effective immediately. Motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 15 – Commissioner's Report

Dr. Deena Bishop presented a 100-Day Report detailing the progress made during her tenure as Commissioner of the Department of Education and Early Development.

Agenda Item 16 – Consent Agenda

First Vice Chair Van Diest motioned, and Member Griffin seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the consent agenda consisting of approval of the minutes of the August 31 2023 board meeting, and October 4-5, 2023 board meeting. Motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 17 – Executive Session: Interview for Student Advisor-Elect

Chair Fields moved the State Board of Education and Early Development convene for an executive session to interview candidates for student advisor elect for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year. Member Griffin seconded. Motion passes unanimously in roll call vote.

Chair Fields motioned for the State Board of Education and Early Development to reconvene into

regular session. First Chair Van Diest seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Fields motioned, and Member Griffin seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development select Joshua Pax as it's Student Advisor for the remainder of the school year 2023-2024. On July 1, 2024, Joshua Pax one year term will begin as the student advisor to the board and continue through June 30, 2025. Motion passed in a roll call vote, 7 yes, 1 no.

Board Comments

Military Advisor Lt. Col. Fowley shared that they had 101 saves this year thanks to the rescue efforts of the Alaska National Guard. Student Advisor Felix Myers highlighted four resolutions that were passed by the Alaska Association of Student Governments that are meant to be referred to the State Board of Education. Second Vice Chair Stockhausen brought up a concern regarding student advisors being limited only to schools who are connected with the Association of Student Government. Suggested the board look into the possibility of changing the regulation to give access to any student who might want to be a part of the state board and would like to discuss this in a future meeting. Member Van Diest shared excitement about the connection of the Cook Inlet Tribal Council and the report that they have and connecting with Tribal Compacting. Thank you to everyone who provided such great presentations to the board.

The board adjourned at 5:21 p.m.